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DEPARTMENT FOR PA, NEA/ARN, INR/IC/CD, INR/S:STHIBEAULT AND
JMCCARTER, VOA NEWS CA, NEA/PPD:CBOURGEOIS, DBENZE AND
AFERNANDEZ, IIP/G/NEA-SA RWINCHESTER
WHITE HOUSE FOR NSC
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TAGS: [KMDR](#) [PREL](#) [KPAO](#) [OPRC](#) [SY](#)

SUBJECT: Damascus Media Reaction: Terrorism, Syria/China,
Lebanon, Palestinian Territories, Iraq, Iran (6/2-4)

¶1. Summary: Government-owned Tishreen, the only paper to appear on Saturday, featured an Interior Ministry statement reporting the clash that took place Friday morning between an anti-terror unit and a terrorist extremist group near Omayyad Square in Damascus. The statement said that the clash resulted in the killing of four terrorists, the wounding of two others, and the arrest of four. It also resulted in the killing of a member of the anti-terror unit and the injury of two others. The statement mentioned that ten US guns were confiscated from the group, with ammunition and other arms, in addition to locally made explosives and tape recordings, including religious sermons. The statement noted that "arms were supplied to the group by a neighboring country to stage sabotage acts aimed at vital targets and national interests." The statement also underlined that the arrested terrorists would be sent to a specialized court after completing the investigation.

Papers also reported a statement by Foreign Minister Walid al-Mouallem describing his visit to China as "fruitful and constructive," adding that the two sides have agreed to continue political deliberations concerning regional and international issues. On the Iranian nuclear file, Mouallem said that Iran is not the cause of chaos in the Middle East. Rather, it is Israel, because Israel has occupied Arab lands in Syria, Palestine, and Lebanon since 1967. Mouallem added that Iranians have repeatedly asserted that their nuclear program is peaceful and that their installations are monitored by the International Atomic Energy Agency, while the Israeli nuclear program is not. He stressed that Syria calls for finding a diplomatic solution for the Iranian nuclear program through dialogue and that it strongly rejects the use of force against Iran, which would destabilize the entire region. In this regard, Mouallem also announced Syria's support of the Chinese position at the UN Security Council when this issue was discussed. On US policy in the region, Al-Mouallem said that when the US began the war against Iraq three years ago, it removed the peace process from its priorities and manifested unlimited support for Israel in the economic, military, and political fields at the expense of the

Arabs' rights, and that it has continued the occupation of Iraq. Therefore, the popularity of this administration is extremely low in the Arab world. Moreover, the US policy toward the Middle East is utterly rejected. Mouallem said that developing countries reject the domination that the US is trying to impose on the region. He urged Washington to opt for dialogue, because it is the civilized tool to bridge gaps and reach a better understanding of the problems and issues of developing countries, particularly the Arab countries. Mouallem added that he asks Americans why Syria has good relations with big countries, such as China, and does not have good relations with one big country, the United States. Mouallem said that the answer is very simple: China understands the problems of the developing countries and does not try to dominate them. Instead, it tries to help and cooperate with these countries through balanced economic relations.

End of summary.

12. Selected Headlines:

"An anti-terror unit clashes with a terrorist group. One element of the unit martyred, four of the terrorist group killed, other terrorists arrested. Confiscation of US made guns from the group with their ammunition in addition to locally made explosives. Terrorists got arms from a neighboring country to stage sabotage acts targeting vital targets and national interests" (Government-owned Tishreen, 6/3)

"Foreign Minister al-Mouallem describes his visit to China as fruitful and constructive. The 'land for peace' principle is the best option. The Syrian people insist on restoration of the occupied Syrian Golan. Al-Mouallem: The policy of hegemony will not be useful.... We call upon Washington for dialogue, as a civilized option" (Government-owned Tishreen, 6/3)

"Foreign Minister Mouallem addresses the Arab-Chinese Cooperation Forum: We share with China the same position on UN reform. The

final communique of the Arab-Chinese Forum calls for enhancing dialogue, boosting peace, increasing the volume of trade and expanding investments" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 6/2)

"Extensive Lebanese protest against L
BC TV Program that mocked

Leader of the Lebanese National Resistance, Hasan Nasrallah. A big mass rally in Tripoli commemorates the anniversary of Rashid Karami's martyrdom. Lebanese Ex-Premier al-Hoss: We will not give up Karami's blood. Former Lebanese Minister Franjieh: Why are killers to be pardoned? Former Lebanese Premier Omar Karami: We reject the use of Lebanon as fuel for the US-Israeli project" (Government-owned Tishreen, 6/3)

"A Russian diplomat killed, four others kidnapped in Baghdad. More than 100 Iraqis killed or injured in attacks in Basra and Baqouba" (Government-owned Tishreen, 6/4)

"Israeli Occupation troops wound ten demonstrating against separation wall. Palestinian Prime Minister Hanieh: We will not retreat from our positions. Others will retreat. We have reservations on the prisoners document" (Government-owned Tishreen, 6/3)

13. Editorial Block Quotes:

"The message has been received"

Isam Dari, an editorialist in government-owned Tishreen, wrote (6/3): "This is not the first time terrorist groups have operated in Syria to destabilize our country and tamper with its security and safety. For many years there have been desperate attempts to realize this evil objective. Syria has witnessed terrorist activity that has harmed all groups of the society without exception.

"And this is not the first time terrorism and its tools have been exported from neighboring countries that are supposed to support Syria in its confrontation of terrorism, first, and of the American and Zionist plans, second.

"But this is perhaps the first time that American-made weapons have been seized. These weapons are not used in Syria, and it is the first time we have heard about them. It is as if the aim is to send an urgent message to the Syrian leadership and people telling them to realize the gravity of their continuing confrontation of the hostile plans against Syria and the Arab nation.

"Some time ago we heard successive fiery statements from known figures in neighboring countries threatening to transfer suicide and terrorist operations [from Iraq] to Syria. Was yesterday's incident in the heart of Damascus a translation of those American-Israeli threats that were uttered in Arabic?

"We will not be surprised by such terrorist operations. Nor will we ask about the reasons that drove superpowers to export terror to Syria through some of their followers in neighboring countries. The issue is crystal clear, and targeting Syria was, and still is, an official policy of the current US Administration, the leaders of Tel Aviv, and a few weak-willed people who have sold themselves to the devil in return for a handful of dollars and temporary posts....

"The message has been received. Syria has read it carefully. But the fact remains: such terrorist operations, pressures, resolutions, and laws that seek to bring Syria to its knees and force it to change its policies and positions will not succeed no matter how skilled the enemies of Syria and the Arabs may be at designing conspiracies and exporting terrorism. Our domestic front is solid -- this is how it was, and this is how it will always remain."

"The Magic Turns Against the Magician"

Ahmad Hamadah, an editorialist in government-owned Al-Thawra, commented (6/2): "The new law proposed by British Prime Minister Tony Blair to sentence to life imprisonment those who refuse to participate in the war on Iraq, which, it has been revealed, is being debated by the British House of Commons, is generating much debate among British people of all persuasions and raising many questions and queries.

"Blair's call for such a law came after the phenomenon of desertions from the British occupation forces in Iraq worsened....

"Perhaps the most important question that must be asked is: Why has the number of desertions from the British and American armies risen to such levels, which are alarming to the military commanders and even to the British and American administrations?

"Does the reason not lie in the fact that these deserters are convinced that they were pushed, against their will, into an illegal war after Blair and Bush deluded them into thinking that the war was fair and legitimate?

"Does the other reason not lie in the fact that these soldiers now realize that the American-British invasion of Iraq was not a picnic, as the leaders of the White House tried to portray it to them, that the losses that the two occupation forces suffer daily are clear before their own eyes, and that they are fully convinced that they are unable to confront the resistance they are facing?

"Bush and Blair thought of oil and hegemony over the region. They did not know that they would be burned by the fires of the oil and lost in the entire region. They failed to subjugate the Iraqi people or break their will. Their tricks backfired, and

here are the Army desertion figures exposing their failure and political crisis, which will get worse every day until the day of the major withdrawal comes."

"Ethical Measures for Unethical War"

Hanan Hamad, a commentator in government-owned Tishreen, wrote (6/3): "The Hadithah massacre in Iraq is not the first scandal in the history of the American occupation of Iraq and will not be the last...."

"Remarks have been made by US military commanders that orders were given to train soldiers on war values and the strict rules of engagement until these values become part of the character of the American fighter, who traveled thousands of miles to invade Iraq based on falsehoods and misleading justifications that have become publicly exposed...."

"The massacres and the killing of civilians are expected to continue in what can be unreservedly described as war crimes.... Investigations of the Hadithah incidents must uncover the role of the higher leaders in covering up the crime...."

"What Comes after Iran's Persistence in Enriching Uranium?"

Ahmad Sawwan, a commentator in government-owned Tishreen, said (6/3): "The American offer for direct talks with Iran is a new

US trick aimed at taming or softening the Iranian position toward all the issues of the region...."

"We believe that the US proposal is not a pure American policy but an Israeli arrangement that the administration of President Bush agreed to implement and declare to serve Israel and protect its occupation and security...."

"Iran knows Washington's objectives quite well and this is why it rushed to reject the American offer...."

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